

# The State of Child Care in Maine *2002*



**Maine Child  
Care Advisory  
Council**



#### Acknowledgements:

This report would not have been possible without the assistance of Jan Lavalley, an Americorp ACT member working with the Maine Department of Human Services' Office of Child Care and Head Start. We also wish to thank the many individuals that responded to surveys and requests for information. Additional thanks to Louise Stoney of the National Child Care Information Center for her editorial review and comments. This report is supported by funding from the Maine Department of Human Services.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Advisory Council .....</b>	<b>.2</b>
<b>Quick Facts .....</b>	<b>.3</b>
<b>Child Care in Maine .....</b>	<b>.5</b>
<b>Licensed Child Care .....</b>	<b>.7</b>
<b>Kith and Kin .....</b>	<b>.8</b>
<b>Cost of Child Care in Maine .....</b>	<b>.10</b>
<b>Subsidized Care .....</b>	<b>.12</b>
<b>Working Families .....</b>	<b>.14</b>
<b>Quality Child Care in Maine .....</b>	<b>.15</b>
<b>Maine Roads to Quality .....</b>	<b>.17</b>
<b>Training Requirements .....</b>	<b>.19</b>
<b>Contact Information .....</b>	<b>.20</b>
<b>Endnotes .....</b>	<b>.21</b>



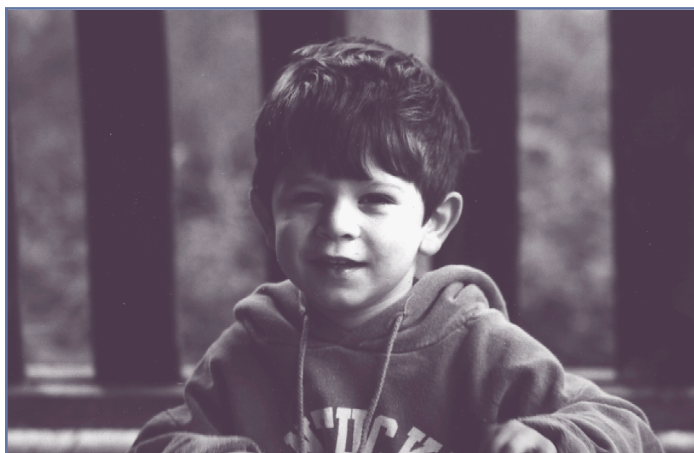
## MAINE CHILD CARE ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Maine Child Care Advisory Council (CCAC) was established by the Maine Legislature in 1994 to:

- Advise the Legislature and the Department of Human Services regarding child care services in the State of Maine;
- Encourage the development of policies coordinated among state agencies to promote quality, uniformity, and efficiency of service;
- Facilitate community input on child care issues through communication among state government, the Legislature, service providers and the public.

The Maine CCAC is made up of representatives of state offices, the legislature, the child care provider community, parents and community stakeholders. Representatives are appointed by various individuals including the Commissioner of the Department of Human Services, the Senate President, the Speaker of the House, and the Governor of the State of Maine. The Council supports the maintenance, development, and provision of child care services in order to promote self-sufficiency and reduce risk to Maine's children and families. The Child Care Advisory Council also encourages the development of child care policies that are coordinated among state agencies to promote quality, uniformity, and efficiency of services.

The Child Care Advisory Council provides a voice for Maine's children and their families regarding child care by working collaboratively to promote safe, healthy child care in the community.



## MAINE CHILD CARE ADVISORY COUNCIL

### 2001 MEMBERSHIP

Lisa Ayotte, Maine Head Start Directors Association

Angela Butler, parent who does not receive a subsidy

Madone Clancy, Child Care Providers

Allyson Dean, Maine Child Care Directors Association

Linda Elias, Maine Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

Carolyn Drugge, Office of Child Care and Head Start

Joe Francis, Native Americans

Peter Gore, Maine Chamber of Commerce

Linda Labas, University of Maine Center for Community Inclusion

Susan Longley, Maine Senate

Dewey Meteer, Child Development Services

Marilyn Russell, Maine Roads to Quality

Nancy Simpson, School Aged Care Provider

Deb Simpson, Maine House of Representatives

Nancy Sirois, Maine Family Child Care Association

Robert Steinberg, Community Services Center

Dianne Stetson, Maine Children's Alliance

David Stockford, Department of Education

Steve Telow, Bureau of Family Independence

Kerry Wiersma, Community Services Center

Linda Williams, Office of Substance Abuse

### VACANT SEATS INCLUDE:

Department of Behavioral and Developmental Services

Department of Economic and Community Development

Maine House of Representatives

Maine Womens Lobby

Parent who receives a subsidy

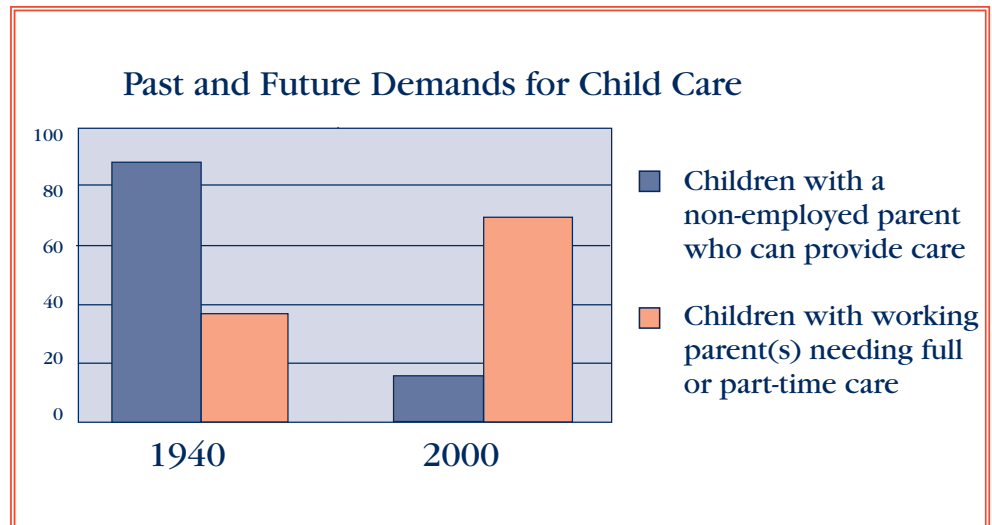
State Fire Marshall



## QUICK FACTS ON MAINE'S CHILDREN AND CHILD CARE

### Maine is home to 209,099 children ages 0-12.<sup>1</sup>

- There are 140,681 children (ages 0-12) with working parents in Maine. 67% of children ages 0-12 live in a household where all adults work.
- In 1940, 87% of children less than six years of age had a nonemployed parent who could provide full-time care.<sup>2</sup>



- In 2001, 26,609 children were served through the Child & Adult Care Food Program, which reimburses family child care providers and child care centers for serving nutritious meals and snacks to children.
- Child care for a four-year-old in a child care center in an urban area averages \$5790 per year. This is more than the average cost of public college tuition in Maine which is \$4,122 per year.<sup>3</sup> The average cost for infant care is \$7670 per year.
- Only 15% of children from income-eligible families received child care assistance in 1999 in Maine. Families do not receive assistance for a variety of reasons, including lack of funding and using informal arrangements.
- There are an estimated 11,380 providers employed in regulated child care in Maine.
- Child care workers earn an average annual income of \$16,230.
- The average annual income for all Maine workers is \$24,899.
- Higher quality child care for very young children (0 to 3) was consistently related to high levels of cognitive and language development.<sup>4</sup>

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*The quality of child care at early ages has a significant impact on child well-being, ability to learn, and readiness for school.<sup>5</sup>*

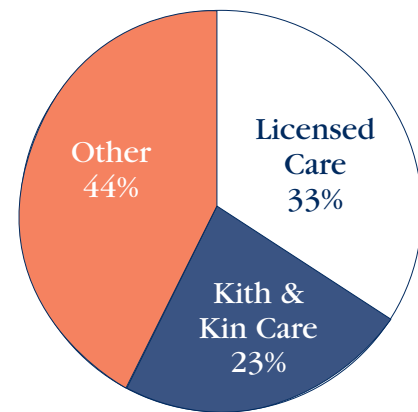
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# CHILD CARE IN MAINE

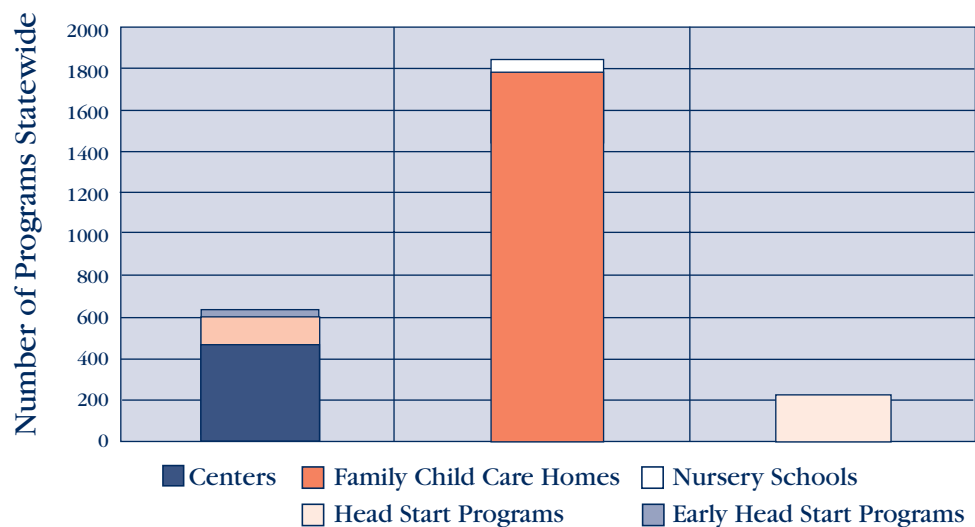
Maine is home to over 200,000 children ages 0-12. Following national trends, more of Maine's parents are working, making child care an essential need for many families. The 2000 Census reports that 67% of Maine children, ages 0-12, live in a household in which all adults are working. Working families need access to childcare regardless of their income or geographic location. Can Maine provide families with the child care options they need to be able to work?

- Only 44% of Maine Citizens who had a child or children under the age of 18 strongly agreed that they “have access to high quality, affordable child care in [their] community”.<sup>6</sup>
- Over 20% of low-income-working parents in Maine acknowledged that they had left their child(ren) in an unsafe child care situation at some point in the prior year in order to work.<sup>7</sup>

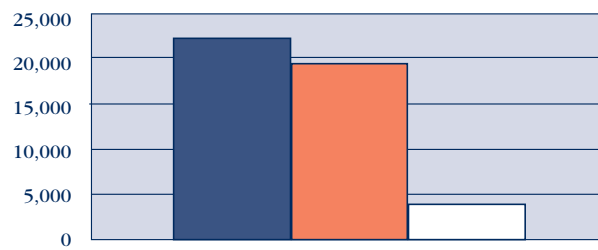
Primary Care Arrangements for Maine's Working Families



Licensed Child Care Arrangements in Maine



Capacity of Licensed Child Care Arrangements



■ Child Care Centers ■ Family Child Care Homes □ Nursery Schools



## LICENSED CHILD CARE IN MAINE

Maine has three licensing options for child care: Centers, Family Child Care Homes, and Nursery Schools. These three combined can accommodate up to 45,815 children.<sup>8</sup> Depending on a family's geographic location, work schedule(s), and the age of their child(ren), finding licensed child care can be a challenge.

Child care centers have a licensed capacity to care for 22,293 children. Family Child Care Homes have a licensed capacity of 19,613 and Nursery Schools are licensed statewide for a maximum capacity of 3,909. Head Start programs are available in licensed centers, family child care homes, and through home visiting programs. There are 12 Head Start grantees

in the state administering 208 programs, which include 27 Early Head Start programs, which serve 3,694 children.

With over 140,000 children needing care while their parents are working and a combined licensed capacity of almost 46,000 (which includes part and full time care arrangements), Maine's licensed child care system can only care for approximately one-third of children with working parents. The remaining two-thirds, or 94,866 children, are cared for in unlicensed arrangements. It is estimated that 23% of children are cared for by Kith (family) and Kin (friend) providers.<sup>5</sup> The remaining 44% of children receive care from in-home babysitters or nannies, Public School Pre-K programs, sibling care, parents alternate schedules, illegal providers, or use no care at all.

### LICENSED CHILD CARE IN MAINE

#### Child Care Centers

Facilities that serve more than three children under the age of 13, and are not a place of residence, are licensed as child care centers. The average child care center in Maine cares for 35 children. Centers often have a more structured schedule and children are grouped according to their age. Child Care Centers usually follow regular work hours and may be closed for holidays. Workers in a center must be at least 18 years of age and a Center Director must have experience and/or an educational background in Early Childhood Education.

#### Family Child Care Homes

A provider can care for up to 12 children in his or her home. The average family child care home cares for 11 children and often has mixed age groups. Family Child Care Providers are required to take a 6 hour training, "Getting Started in Family Child Care", before getting a license to care for children. Yearly minimum training require-

ments, including CPR and First Aid, must be maintained. If a person cares for only one or two children they are exempt from license requirements.

#### Head Start

Head Start is a comprehensive early childhood development program for children, ages 3-5, whose family income is at or below the poverty level or who have a disability. Comprehensive services include education, health, nutrition, and social and physical development. Traditionally Head Start is a part-day, part-year program, operating for 3 ½ to 6 hours per day for 32 weeks a year. Many programs offer full-day, full-year "wrap around" child care services for working parents.

#### Early Head Start

Early Head Start is a family focused program for children ages 0-3 whose family income is at or below the poverty level or who have a disability. Maine has the highest percentage of Head Start programs that offer Early Head Start services in centers and family child care homes in New England. Often Early Head Start services are offered

almost exclusively through home-based programming in which Head Start personnel go to the child's home to meet with the family.

#### Home Start

Head Start is also offered in family child care homes throughout the state. Home Start offers families who use Head Start services a choice in delivery of the services. Home Start programs are often smaller, serving 1-5 children, than center based programs, which serve group sizes of more than 10 children.

#### Nursery Schools

Nursery schools offer programming to children, ages 3-7, for no more than 3 1/2 hours per day, 2-5 days a week. The preschool programming often provides a structured curriculum to an average of 10 children in a group.

#### Legal-Unlicensed Child Care

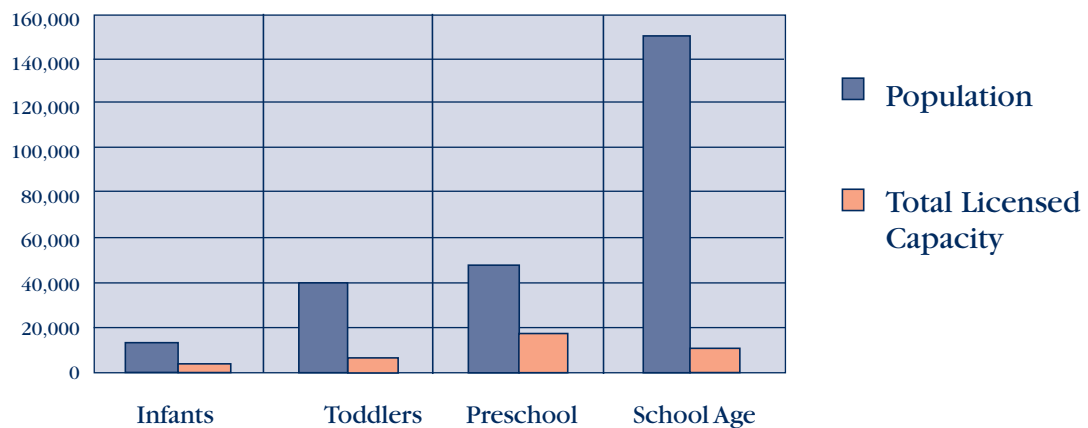
Kith and Kin (family and friend) caregivers, are considered "legal-unlicensed" if they care for one or two children in their home or the child's home.

## LICENSED CHILD CARE IN MAINE BY COUNTY

### Number of Programs and Capacity

County	Number of Child Care Centers	Capacity of Child Care Centers	Number of Family Child Care Homes	Capacity of Family Child Care Homes	Number of Nursery Schools	Capacity of Nursery Schools	Number of Head Start Programs	Number of Children served in Head Start
ANDROSCOGGIN	49	1932	236	2490	11	216	14	385
AROOSTOOK	25	694	70	791	5	92	15	314
CUMBERLAND	165	6679	397	3816	47	1032	27	488
FRANKLIN	15	331	48	524	4	72	31	181
HANCOCK	29	740	57	576	12	213	6	97
KENNEBEC	63	2325	234	2427	21	392	26	401
KNOX	16	705	38	419	6	108	6	121
LINCOLN	24	690	35	362	7	132	5	111
OXFORD	30	640	71	1664	7	141	16	281
PENOBSCOT	56	1824	153	1595	22	401	13	357
PISCATAQUIS	6	137	15	127	6	86	4	72
SAGadahoc	19	620	50	536	4	58	3	85
SOMERSET	15	388	74	660	9	144	11	157
WALDO	16	512	57	602	6	104	6	157
WASHINGTON	15	478	30	308	5	86	8	204
YORK	93	3598	269	2716	40	632	17	283
MAINE	636	22,293	1834	19,613	212	3,909	208	3,694

**Population compared to Licensed Child Care Capacity by Age**



# KITH AND KIN CARE IN MAINE

An estimated twenty-three percent of children with working parents are cared for by Kith and Kin providers. Research around informal care arrangements has shown that families choose this care for a variety of reasons including a child's age, scheduling needs, variable and unpredictable work obligations, availability of alternatives, and cost<sup>10</sup>

## Child's age

Many parents prefer home-based care by familiar individuals for infants and toddlers. School-age children usually need care for a few hours a day before and/or after school and on vacations and during the summer. Licensed capacity for school aged children is the lowest served age group in the state. Maine currently has the licensed capacity to serve about 26% of the infants, 16% of toddlers, 36% of preschoolers, and only 8% of school age children in need of care.<sup>11</sup>

## Scheduling needs

Many parents need child care part-time or during nontraditional hours, such as night or weekend shifts. The chart below shows that center based and family child care offer limited schedules, especially for evening, overnight, and weekend care hours. Kith and Kin providers are more likely to be able to care for children at these non-traditional work times than regulated care providers.

## Variable and unpredictable work obligations

Many parents work irregular hours or days that do not match the licensed child care providers need for the dependable income earned by providing full time care.

## Availability of alternatives

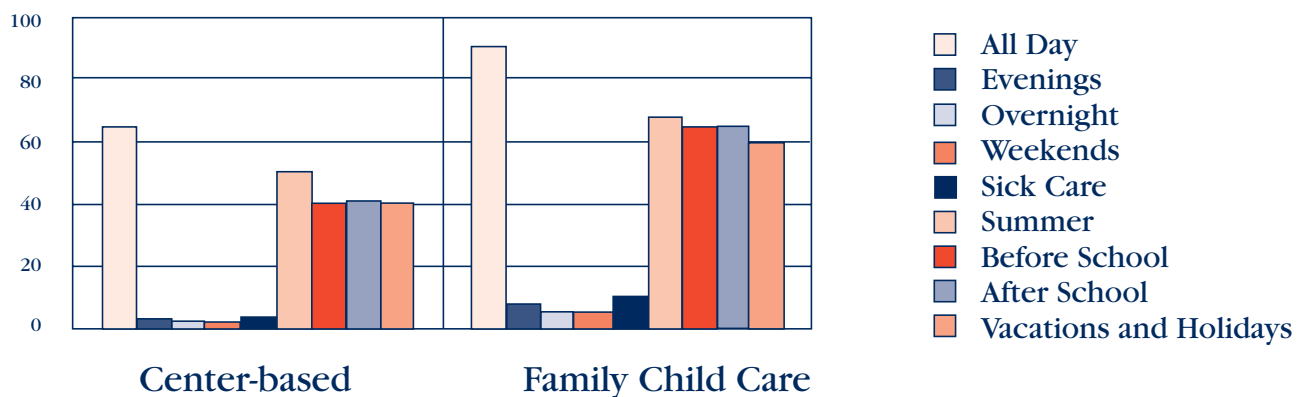
With the limited capacity of licensed care arrangements, families may not be able to find regulated care that suits their needs.

## Cost

Kith and Kin providers often provide care at a lower cost or at no cost to families.



Availability of Licensed Child Care



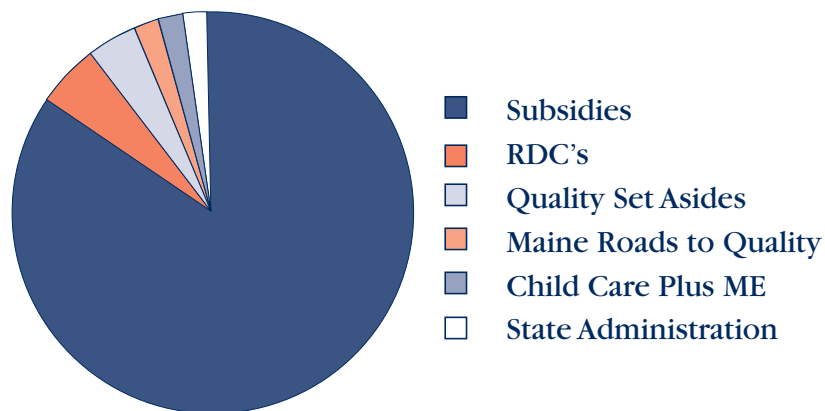


# MAINE CHILD CARE FUNDING

The Office of Child Care and Head Start, within the Maine Department of Human Services, administers the Federal Child Care Development Fund and the Head Start Collaboration grant. The Office is also responsible for program planning and implementation of early child care and education systems improvement, voucher and subsidized contracted child care program policy, and coordination of the child care service system components.

Maine's child care budget is a combination of funds from the Child Care Development Fund, Federal

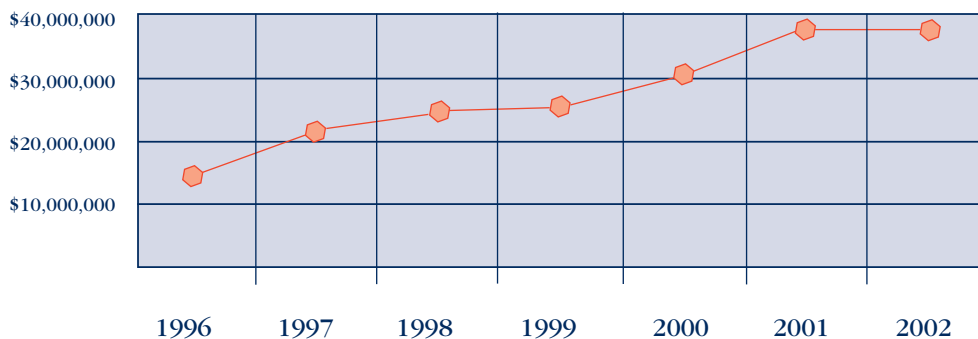
Child Care Budget Expenditures in Maine



Social Services Block Grant, and State funds. The total budget for Fiscal year 2002 is \$37,456,822, with an additional \$10,400,000 projected to be spent directly from the TANF block grant on child care subsidies for current TANF recipients.<sup>12</sup>

Around 84% of the total annual budget for child care in Maine is spent on child care subsidies for low-income families. The remaining funds go to Resource Development Centers, Maine Roads to Quality, Child Care Plus ME, quality initiatives, and state administration.

Child Care Funding in Maine





## **RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT CENTERS**

The Maine Department of Human Services contracts with a network of 11 statewide Child Care Resource Development Centers (RDCs) to make referrals to parents seeking child care and provide information on financial assistance, administer the state childcare voucher program, offer training to child care providers, and provide resources and technical assistance to providers and parents. In 2001, the RDC's provided training to over 1,200 child care providers and technical assistance to 4,907 providers. The RDC's provided 7,383 child care referrals and provided child care consumer education and information to 10,659 families.

## **QUALITY SET-ASIDES**

The Department provides a 10% differential reimbursement to quality child care providers. Other quality initiatives include funding for conferences on caring for infants and toddlers, scholarships for providers' training and education, and funding to support school age care initiatives.

## **MAINE ROADS TO QUALITY**

The Department funds the state's child care and early care and education career development center, Maine Roads to Quality (MRTQ). MRTQ is responsible for the development of a 180 hour Core Knowledge Training program, maintaining registries for providers and approved trainers, administering a scholarship program, and administering an accreditation support project.

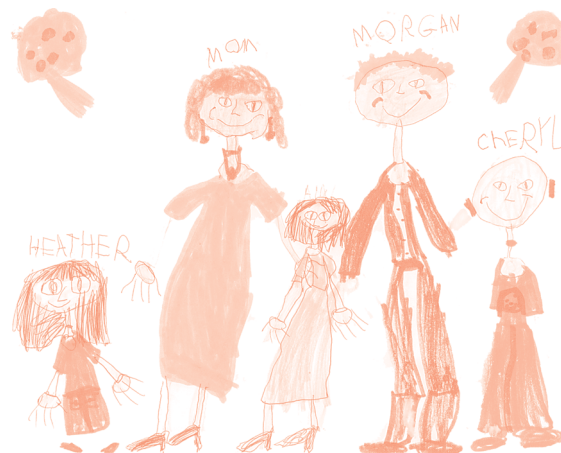
## **CHILD CARE PLUS ME**

Child Care Plus ME is a collaborative partnership between the Maine Department of Human Services' Office of Child Care and Head Start and the University of

Maine's Center for Community Inclusion (CCI). The staff at CCI offers problem solving assistance and training to support child care centers, child care homes, families, preschools, public schools, and community programs so that they may provide quality experiences for all children, including children with challenging behaviors and children with medical, physical, and developmental disabilities. Child Care Plus ME offers telephone consultation, video review and consultation, on-site consultation, staff development and training activities, and resource information. A health consultant is available to all child care providers for telephone consultation regarding any health questions.

## **TRUST ME**

Trust ME is a program financed by the Department of Human Services which performs background checks on legal unlicensed providers and maintains a database that is available to parents to verify the background of their Kith and Kin provider. The Trust ME network also provides information to Kith and Kin caregivers on child care health and safety issues.



# THE COST OF CHILD CARE IN MAINE

Child care is expensive, and often costs more than a college education. The average price of full-time, year-round care in a Maine child care center is \$7419 for an infant and \$5479 for a four-year-old. The average cost of public college tuition in the state of Maine is \$4058.<sup>13</sup>

How could preschool cost more than college? It actually doesn't cost more, but the consumer price is

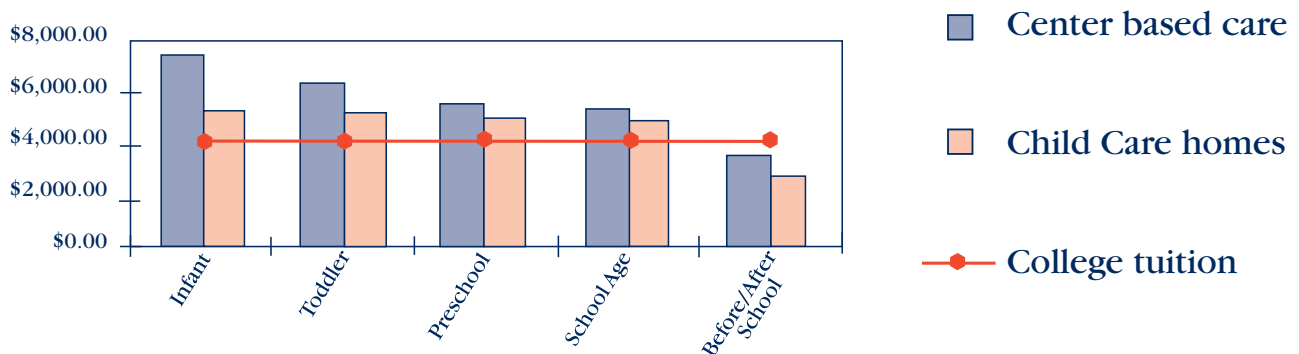
higher because colleges (public and private) have other financial support in addition to tuition. On average, tuition comprises only 35% of revenues at colleges and universities.<sup>14</sup> But in child care, tuition comprises about 87% of revenues.<sup>15</sup> While publicly funded programs like Head Start charge no fee, most centers rely heavily on parent fees to cover their costs.

## Maine Department of Human Services Child Care Market Rate Survey

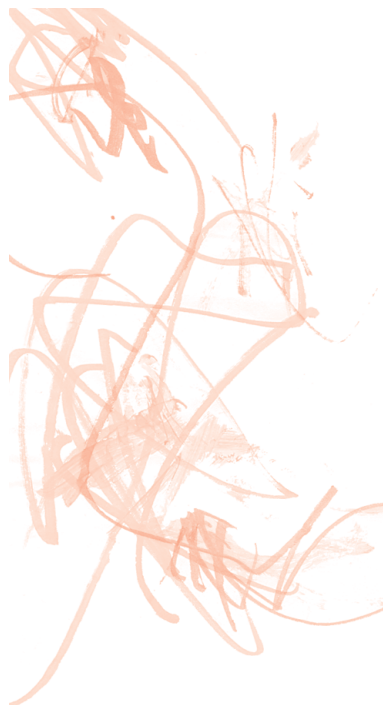
### *Average weekly rates by type of care and age group*

	<i>Child Care Centers</i>	<i>Child Care Homes</i>	<i>Legal Unregulated</i>
<i>Infants</i>	\$142.68	\$100.31	\$95.70
<i>Toddlers</i>	\$120.32	\$98.13	\$88.37
<i>Preschool</i>	\$105.19	\$94.40	\$84.96
<i>School Age</i>	\$101.80	\$90.20	\$77.95
<i>Before/After School</i>	\$67.68	\$54.60	\$52.11

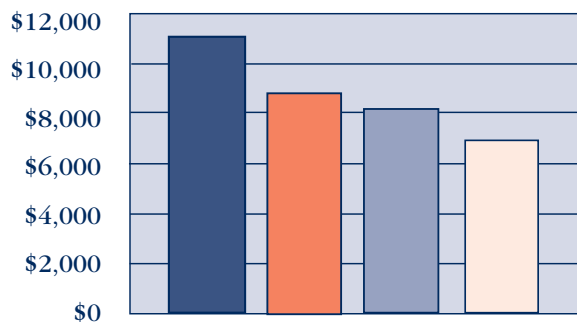
## Yearly Child Care Fees versus tuition to Public College



Child care is also a costly service because it is so labor intensive. Due to the low staff-to-child ratios that are essential to quality and mandated by regulation, personnel costs drive the budget. Facility costs can also be high and most child care programs are small. There are no economies of scale in the child care industry, especially in a rural state like Maine.



### Actual Cost of Providing Quality Child Care



Annual Costs

■ Infants- \$11,117

■ Toddlers - \$8,916

■ Pre-Schoolers - \$8,164

■ School Age - \$6,807

**PERSONNEL:** 83% of cost (Director, Teachers, Assistant Teachers, Kitchen, Administrative, Maintenance)

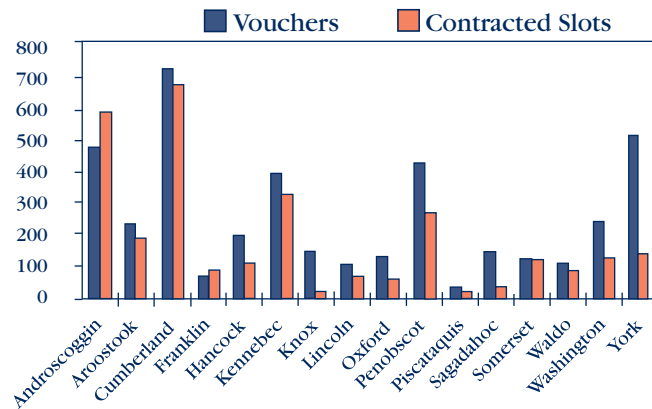
**FACILITY:** 9% of cost (Rent, Utilities, Insurance)

**PROGRAM:** 8% of cost (Food, Equipment, Consumable supplies, Other expenses)

# MAINE'S SUBSIDIZED CARE SYSTEM

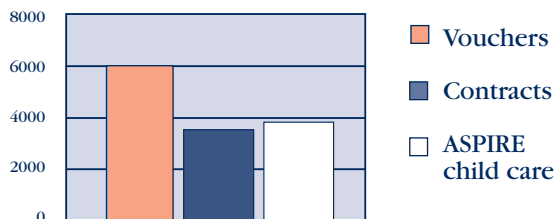
Maine has two ways to help low-income families pay child care tuition – vouchers and contracts. The voucher system, which is managed by eleven Resource Development Centers located around the state, is a portable subsidy. This means that funds follow the child to whichever program or provider the parent selects, including care provided by kith and kin. In addition, child care “slots” are purchased for low-income families in sixty agencies with whom the Department has negotiated contracts. 82% of these slots are in center-based care and 18% are in family child care homes that are part of a network. Although the contract system is not as flexible for families, it allows the state to ensure that care is available to low-income families in underserved areas and, in some cases, it allows families to access higher-quality care including programs that are accredited and/or offer comprehensive social, health, and mental health services.

Voucher and Contracted Slot Use by County

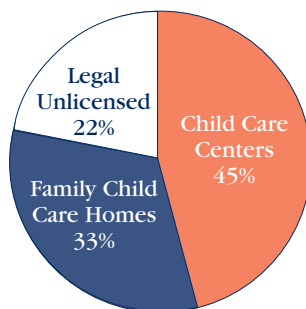


The contract and voucher systems both use the same income eligibility criteria and co-payment schedule. To be eligible, families must be working or in job training and must have a family income that is less than 85% of the State Median Income (SMI). In 2002, 85% of the Maine SMI for a family of three is \$41,080. In Maine, a family's co-payment for child care services, regardless of the number of children in care, will not exceed 10% of their total gross income.

Maine Subsidized Care Use FY 2001



Child Care Subsidies by Provider Type  
Maine - FY 2001



Currently Maine provides child care assistance to over 13,000 children through vouchers and contracts,<sup>16</sup> which includes almost 2000 TANF clients through ASPIRE child care.<sup>17</sup>

Voucher Waiting Lists (12/01/00)

AGE	CHILDREN ON WAITING LISTS STATEWIDE
Infants	180
Toddlers	346
Preschoolers	804
School Age	719

At the end of 2000, there were 2069 children on voucher waiting lists statewide.<sup>18</sup>

This number does not accurately reflect the need for subsidized child care.

Estimates for children eligible for child care assistance but unable to access a subsidy have been as high as 30,000.<sup>19</sup>

Many families who are eligible for child care subsidies do not apply, either because they do not know that assistance is available or they have heard that there is a waiting list and that the wait could be very long.



**The National Center for Children in Poverty recommends several goals in managing subsidy systems.<sup>20</sup>**

**These goals include the following:**

- **Increase families' access to the systems of subsidized care. Advertise the availability of child care subsidies for low-income families, encourage parents to take advantage of them, and make it easy for parents to apply.**
  - \* The Office of Child Care and Head Start and the network of Maine Resource Development Centers are committed to raising awareness of the subsidy system among low-income families. Brochures are being created and information about subsidies, including application information and forms, will be posted on the Office of Child Care and Head Start website which is expected to be on-line in early 2002.
- **Maintain enough subsidized child care settings to meet the demand and use several different approaches to increase supply, while ensuring quality.**
  - \* Maine commits a very large portion of the state child care budget to subsidies. Maine has many different quality initiatives to increase the quantity of child care in the state including tax incentives to quality programs, training initiatives, institutes to increase infant/toddler care, school-age care initiatives, and quality improvement grants.
- **Ensure that subsidized care is of high quality by educating parents on how to identify quality care, monitoring providers, and creating incentives to meet quality standards.**
  - \* Maine currently has a publication available to parents called "Steps to Choosing Childcare" which is currently available on-line. The Office of Child



Care and Head Start is very open to hearing parent concerns, and regulations state that parents should be encouraged to be involved in their children's care arrangement(s). In the last year, legislative efforts resulted in the hiring of three additional licensing workers (bringing the state total to 7) and three additional fire marshals to help improve Maine's current system of monitoring and enforcing provider compliance with state and local requirements. The 2001 Quality Improvement Grants distributed over \$2 million dollars to 292 child care providers, centers, and organizations.



## MAINE'S WORKING FAMILIES

Child Care is an essential component to a healthy economy in Maine. In order to be able to work, parents must be able to find and afford child care. In order for a parent to be a dependable employee, they must be able to rely on dependable child care. Child Care is also crucial to modern businesses being able to recruit and retain employees. Sixty-one percent of families with children ages 0-5 and over 70% of families with children ages 6-14 are “working families”.<sup>21</sup> “Working families” includes both single-parent and two-parent families in which all adults work. Child care has become a need for a majority of Maine families.

The chart below shows a budget for a family of three with an income that is below 85% of the SMI (State Median Income) making them eligible for a child care subsidy. Even with a subsidy, this family will have a hard time meeting the basic expenses. Families who are below 85% of the SMI but are unable to access a subsidy, or those families whose incomes are at or just above 85% of SMI, are faced with critical decisions. This situation can lead to difficult choices of paying for quality child care or paying for rent or medical care.

### Distribution of Maine Household Spending Study

Family of three with one child in child care with an income of \$36,452 (eligible for child care subsidy)

	Annual	Monthly	Weekly
Food <sup>1</sup>	\$4,500	\$375	\$67
Housing, Including Rent or Mortgage, Heat and Utilities <sup>2</sup>	\$10,465	\$872	\$201
Apparel/Services	\$1,704	\$142	\$33
Transportation, Including Gas, Insurance, Upkeep, and Repairs <sup>3</sup>	\$2,664	\$222	\$51
Health Care <sup>4</sup>	\$5,724	\$477	\$110
Child Care (With Subsidy)	\$3,640	\$303	\$70
Taxes	\$4,236	\$353	\$81
<b><i>Birthdays &amp; Holiday Spending, Emergencies</i></b>	\$3,519	\$293	\$67
<i>Trips to see Grandma, Tithing to the Church</i>			
<i>School Supplies, and everything else in the world</i>			
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$36,452</b>	<b>\$3,038</b>	<b>\$701</b>
Child Care Expense with no Subsidy <sup>5</sup>	6,240	520	120
<b><i>Family Bottom Line Becomes:</i></b>	<b><i>-\$2,721</i></b>	<b><i>-\$227</i></b>	<b><i>-\$52</i></b>

<sup>1</sup> Food Costs based upon U.S.D.A. “low cost food plan”. USDA Food Plan represents the amount families need to spend to achieve “nutritionally adequate diets.” USDA Food plans are available at [www.usda.gov/cnpp/using3.htm](http://www.usda.gov/cnpp/using3.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Baseline housing figures based upon the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile of Department of Housing and Urban Development Fair Market Rents for “safe and sanitary rental housing” in Maine. Additional heat and utility costs were figured at \$170.00 per month per unit.

<sup>3</sup> From “Hardships in America – The Real Story of Working Families” Boushey, Brocht, Sundersen, Berstein, published by the Economic Policy Institute, 2001

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Based upon 75% percentile of market rate for child care in Maine for a pre-school child enrolled in a center, from 2000 Market Rate Study.



# QUALITY CHILD CARE IN MAINE

Research has demonstrated time and again that there are four major factors in ensuring child care quality: Staff to Child Ratios, Group Size, Preparations and Qualifications of Staff, and Caregiver Stability.

## STAFF TO CHILD RATIOS

*The single most important factor in quality child care is the relationship between the child and the caregiver. Studies on staff ratios show that when adults have fewer children to care for, the children's verbal proficiency improves. A 1995 study concluded that states with less stringent standards had a greater number of low-quality centers and that quality is directly associated with higher staff-to-child ratios.<sup>22</sup>*

### Maine's Staff to Child Ratios

Maine's ratios are very close to the national standards set by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Maine's Current Staff to Child Ratios  
for Facilities  
Serving over 13 children

AGE	RATIO
6 weeks to 12-15 months	1:4
12-15 months to 33-36 months	1:5
30 months to 6 years	1:8
36 months to 6 years	1:10
6 years to 15 years	1:13

NAEYC average Staff to Child  
recommendations for Facilities  
Serving over 13 children

AGE	RATIO
6 weeks to 12 months	1:4
12 months to 24 months	1:4
24 months to 36 months	1:5
36 months to 48 months	1:8
48 months to kindergarten	1:9
kindergarten to 15 years	1:12

## GROUP SIZE

*Limiting the total number of children in one group or classroom has positive effects on child development, especially for very young children. Studies have shown that when group size becomes too big, caregivers spend more time trying to manage behavior than attending to children's individual needs.<sup>23</sup>*

### Maine's Group Size Limits

Maine currently allows fairly large group sizes compared to the nationally recommended standards.

Maine's Current Group size Limits  
for Facilities  
Serving over 13 children

AGE	Maximum group size
6 weeks to 12-15 months	12
12-15 months to 33-36 months	15
30 months to 6 years	24
36 months to 6 years	30
6 years to 15 years	N/A

NAEYC average recommended  
Group Size Limits for Facilities  
Serving over 13 children

AGE	Maximum group size
6 weeks to 12 months	8
12 months to 24 months	12
24 months to 36 months	15
36 months to 48 months	16
48 months to kindergarten	18
kindergarten to 15 years	36

## PREPARATIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS OF STAFF

***Research suggests that children whose caregivers have higher formal education and more specialized training perform better on tests of cognitive and language development than do children who are cared for by under-trained individuals.***<sup>24</sup>

The Quality 2000 Initiative<sup>25</sup> researched the relationship between program quality and staff training and facility licensure. Their research supported the widely held view that a “wonderful, knowledgeable teacher can make an immense difference for children and their families”. The training and education of staff working in the Child Care field is an important factor in program quality. “Given excellent, ongoing



training and appropriate working conditions, many caregivers can nurture and engage young children, leading to secure attachments that are so crucial to healthy development”.<sup>26</sup>

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*The more training and education practitioners have – both general education and early childhood-related training and education – the more skilled they are at helping young children thrive and achieve their potential.*<sup>27</sup>

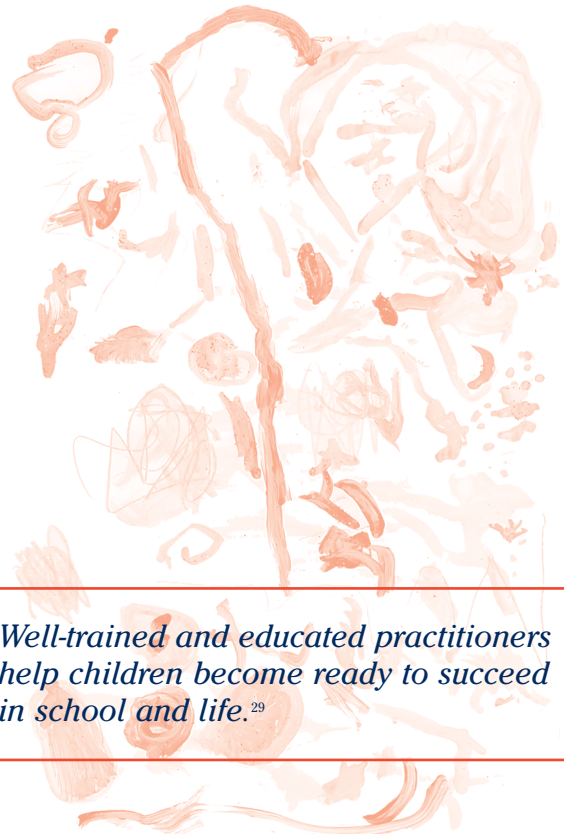
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The opportunity for education, training, and work experience is critical for the child care and early education practitioner. Parents have the right to expect that the people who are providing child care services have knowledge of how children grow and develop, and are competent to deliver high quality programs and services.

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*As practitioners attend more training and become better educated, there are increases in their sensitivity and responsiveness, in the complexity of children’s play with each other, and in the frequency of children being securely attached to them.*<sup>28</sup>

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*Well-trained and educated practitioners help children become ready to succeed in school and life.*<sup>29</sup>

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# MAINE ROADS TO QUALITY

Over the last decade, Maine, through the Office of Child Care and Head Start, the Early Childhood Higher Education Committee and other concerned partners, has worked to develop a comprehensive, fully articulated career development system that recognizes the diversity of levels of professional preparation, different roles practitioners perform, and the different settings that provide child care and early education services to young children and their families.

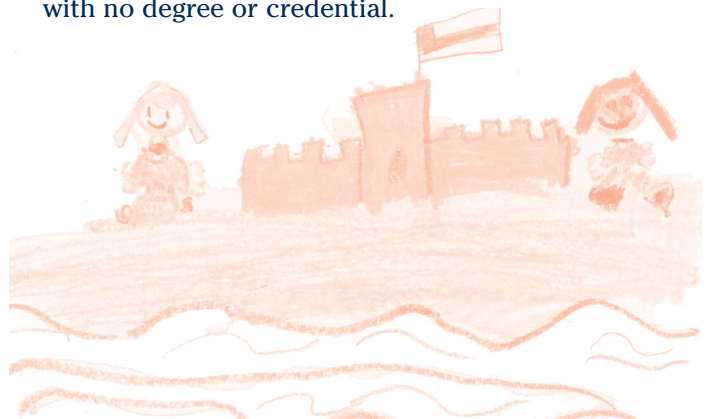
Established in 1999, Maine Roads to Quality: Child Care and Early Education Career Development Center, was contracted by the Maine Department of Human Services to provide services to child care and early education providers that support them in their professional development in the following ways:

- Recognizing providers who are pursuing their professional development goals;
- Operating the Maine Registry, which tracks providers' progress along various career pathways;
- Developing and coordinating the Maine Roads to Quality 180-hour Core Knowledge Training Program that can lead to college credit;
- Providing funding for higher education and CDA support for providers through the Scholarship Program;
- Working with higher education to ensure two- and four- year Early Childhood Education program options are available for providers who choose to pursue college degrees.

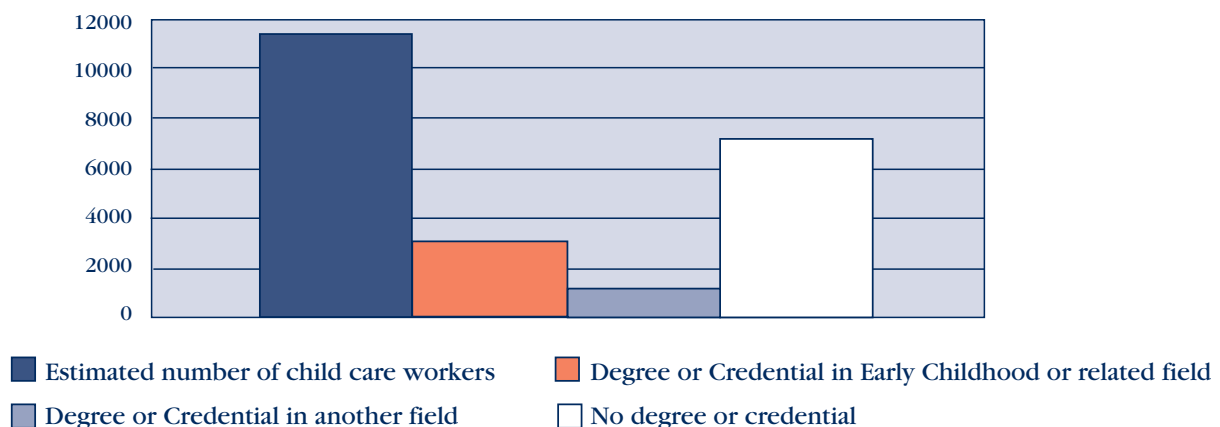
The Maine Registry Career Path documents child care and early education practitioners' experience, training,

and education. Currently there are almost 500 Child Care and Early Education professionals on the Maine Registry. The Registry has three child care and early education settings: Family Child Care Professional, Center Based Direct Care Professional, and School Age Direct Care Professional. The Career Path also assigns levels of achievement to practitioners in Management/Coordination and Administration. Each child care and early education setting has six to eight levels of achievement; from novice for those just entering the field and meeting the basic state licensing requirements, to higher levels based on a combination of education, training, and experience. In 2001, the Core Knowledge Training was provided to approximately 800 providers statewide by the 11 Child Care Resource Development Centers.

There are an estimated 11,308 providers employed in regulated child care in Maine.<sup>30</sup> The Maine Roads to Quality Baseline Survey, 2000, estimates that 27% of child care workers have a degree or credential in Early Childhood or a related field. Another 10% of child care professionals have a degree or credential in another field. This leaves 63% of child care workers with no degree or credential.



Maine's Child Care Workforce



## CAREGIVER STABILITY

*Children who receive care from a small number of consistent providers can be better adjusted in the first grade and over the long term. High staff turnover interferes with the bonding of children to caregivers. Developing a child's sense of trust is necessary for children's emotional and cognitive development. A 1990 study found that staff wages were the most important predictor of overall quality of care and staff turnover.<sup>31</sup>*

### Turnover and Experience Levels of Maine's Child Care Workforce

In the spring of 2000, Maine Roads to Quality conducted a survey of licensed centers and nursery schools. Program directors were asked how many teachers left in the prior year. Based on the response rate from centers, the turnover rate for teaching staff was estimated to be twenty percent. The National

Association for the Education of Young Children estimates that the national turnover rate for all child care workers is close to 40%.

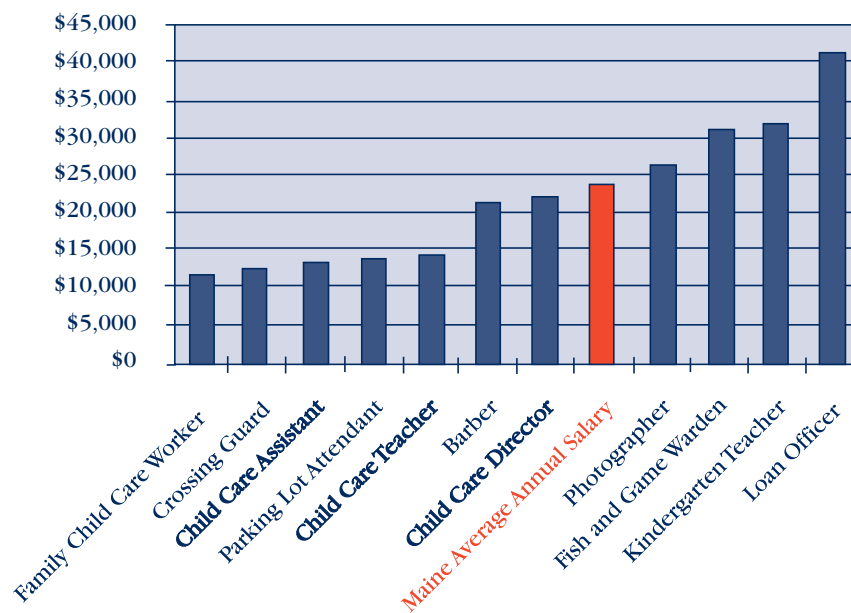
MRTQ reports that Family Child Care providers average 10 years of experience, while 35% of child care center staff have less than one year experience in their current position or center. The high turnover rate and low levels of experience and education levels can be attributed to extremely low wages and benefits.

### Wages of Maine's Child Care Workforce

The average wage for a Maine child care teacher is \$7.80 per hour, with an average yearly salary of \$16,230.<sup>32</sup> The average annual salary for all Maine employees is \$24,899, regardless of education or skill level.<sup>33</sup> The average yearly salary for a Center Director in Maine, who must meet education and experience requirements, is only \$23,878.<sup>34</sup> Child Care positions offer below average wages for the state of Maine and they rarely offer any health or personal benefits. Nationally the average yearly salary for a home child care provider is \$13,785.<sup>35</sup>

## Child Care Workforce Earnings in Perspective

*A Comparison of Mean Hourly Wages between Child Care Jobs and Other Occupations*





## ***Training Requirements to work in the Child Care field***

In Maine, staff members in child care centers are not required to have any early childhood training before serving children. Depending on the size of the facility and full- or part-time work status, providers are required to participate in 6-24 clock hours of training per year. There are currently no specific requirements for the training. There are training and experience requirements for Directors and/or Head Teachers in child care centers. The requirements become heightened as the capacity of the center increases. For a facility licensed for 50 or more children, the Director/Head Teacher must have a minimum of two years (60 credits) of college courses, including 12 credit hours in early childhood or closely related field and one year's experience in a facility serving more than

13 children. Group leaders at facilities licensed for more than 13 children must have at least 6 months experience working in a facility licensed for more than 13 children.<sup>36</sup>

Providers in family child care homes are required to take a 6-hour "Getting Started in Family Childcare" training within the first year of their license to operate a family child care home. Maine is one of eleven states in the country to require training for family child care providers before they serve children.<sup>37</sup>

Head Start Programs require that by September 2003, 50% of all Head Start teachers have an Associates (AA) or Bachelors Degree (BA, BS) in Early Childhood Education or a related degree with experience teaching preschool children.

## **Higher Education in Early Childhood in Maine**

The US Department of Labor states that the employment of preschool teachers and child-care workers is projected to increase faster than the average for all occupations through the year 2008. As the need for teachers and child care workers increases, the demand for education and training opportunities for those entering and staying in the field will increase. Maine's Technical Colleges offer students opportunities to obtain their CDA and/or Associates Degree. Currently only one University (the University of Maine Farmington) offers a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood. The University of Maine Orono offers a concentration in Early Childhood to combine with a Bachelor's Degree in a related field. Wheelock College in Boston, Massachusetts offers an off-campus Master's Degree program in Portland, Maine.

In the fall of 2001, 1115 students were enrolled in higher education programs in Early Childhood around the state. Eight-five students were enrolled in CDA courses, 19 in one-year certificate programs, 580 in Associates Degree programs, 277 in Bachelors Degree programs, and 25 in Wheelock's Masters Degree program.<sup>38</sup>

## ***Quality Certificates***

The Maine Department of Human Services recognizes programs of quality by offering Quality Certificates to child care providers and centers who apply and meet one of the following criteria:

- Current accreditation by one of the following agencies: National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC), or the National School Age Care Association (NSACA).
- Meets the Head Start Performance Standards for Programs of Excellence or Quality.
- Is a family child care provider with a Child Development Associate Credential (CDA); or an Associates, Bachelors, Masters, or PhD in Early Childhood Education, child development, or related degree. Providers with a related degree need at least 12 credits in Early Childhood Education. Providers with degrees will also need to complete a 3 credit course or 45 hours of Core Knowledge Training every 3 years.

There are currently 212 programs with Quality Certificates.

## *Activities and Services to Improve the Quality and Availability of Child Care*

- The Department funds the state's child care and early care and early education career development center, Maine Roads to Quality (MRTQ) located at the University of Southern Maine, Muskie School.
- The Department of Human Services provided \$98,359 in scholarship funding to 127 child care providers in 2001 to attend CDA credential programs and college degree programs. The scholarships are managed by MRTQ.
- The Department provides a 10% differential reimbursement to quality child care providers who receive vouchers or are under contract with DHS. As an incentive for parents to use programs of quality, the allowable credit under the tax section "Individual credit for child care expenses" doubles if the child care expenses paid were for quality child care. The credit is refundable up to \$500.
- The Department funds five consultant positions, including a mental health position, at the Child Care Plus ME program within the University of Maine, Center for Community Inclusion. The consultants are available to child care providers through a toll free number to provide support and technical assistance.
- The Department of Human Services, through the Cumberland County Child Care Resource Development Center, supports an annual conference on caring for infants.
- A summer institute was held to increase training opportunities for infant care and expand availability of caregivers. Caregivers attended the one-week, 3-credit course with the understanding that they would agree to provide infant-toddler care in their program. Upon completion of the course, providers received a small grant to purchase equipment necessary for a quality infant/toddler program.
- The Department provides funding to the Maine School Age Care Alliance to assist with the costs of an annual statewide conference and to support their efforts to provide technical assistance to schools and other entities considering starting a school age care program.
- The Department of Human Services contracts with a network of statewide Child Care Resource Development Centers to improve the availability and accessibility of child care.

## *CONTACT INFORMATION*

### **Maine Department of Human Services Office of Child Care and Head Start**

11 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333  
(207) 287-5060  
FAX (207) 287-5031  
TTD (207) 287-5048

### **Maine Roads to Quality**

PO Box 15010  
Portland, ME 04112  
1-888-900-0055

### **Child Care Plus ME**

5717 Corbett Hall, rm 114  
University of Maine  
Orono, ME 04469  
(207) 581-1084 (v/tty)  
1-800-203-6957 (v/tty)  
FAX (207) 581-1231

### **Trust ME**

9 Higgins Street  
Augusta, ME 04330  
1-866-638-7878

### **Child Care Resource Development Centers**

**Aroostook County:** Child Care Express 1-800-432-7881 or (207) 768-3045

**Cumberland County (except Brunswick/Harpswell):** Child Care Connections 1-888-917-1100 or (207) 871-7449

**Franklin, Oxford, and Androscoggin Counties:** Finders Seekers 1-800-543-7008 or (207) 777-1387

**Hancock County:** Child Care Opportunities 1-800-834-4378 or (207) 667-9580/667-2467

**Kennebec and Southern Somerset Counties:** Child Care Options 1-800-525-2229 or (207) 626-3410

**Knox County:** Coastal Child Care (207) 594-5342 and for referrals call 1-877-684-0466

**Lincoln and Sagadahoc Counties and Brunswick/Harpswell:** Family Focus 1-800-675-2413 or (207) 725-2413 and for referrals call 1-877-684-0466

**Piscataquis, Penobscot, and Northern Somerset Counties:** Penquis Child Care (207) 941-2840

**Waldo County:** Belfast Area Child Care (207) 342-5537 and for referrals call 1-877-684-0466

**Washington County:** Downeast Child Care 1-800-233-3632 or (207) 546-7544

**York County:** Carelink 1-888-917-1100 or (207) 324-0735



## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Information from the 2000 Federal Census Data and the Children's Defense Fund "2001 Children in the States"
- <sup>2</sup> Donald J. Hernandez, "Changing Demographics: Past and Future Demands for Early Childhood Programs" from *The Future of Children*, Volume 5, Number 3 – Winter 1995. Pg. 146.
- <sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), "Fall Enrollment" and "Institutional Characteristics" surveys. Prepared September 2000.
- <sup>4</sup> Mother-Child Interaction and Cognitive Outcomes Associated with Early Child Care," NICHD Early Child Care Research Network (1997)
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid
- <sup>6</sup> *Maine Development Foundation's Annual Survey of Maine Citizens, 2000*
- <sup>7</sup> The Maine Center for Economic Policy Study of Low-income working families, 1997
- <sup>8</sup> Maine Department of Human Services Licensed Provider Listing; November, 2001
- <sup>9</sup> Maine Department of Human Services estimates that the same number of children use Kith and Kin care as the number of children who access a subsidy
- <sup>10</sup> Carnegie Corporation's Starting Points: Meeting the Needs of Our Youngest Children
- <sup>11</sup> Maine Alliance for Children's Care, Education, and Supporting Services, Early Care and Education in Maine, 2001
- <sup>12</sup> Information provided by the Maine Department of Human Services, Office of Child Care and Head Start
- <sup>13</sup> National Center for Educational Statistics, 2000
- <sup>14</sup> This statistic includes both public and private colleges. Source: Mitchell, Stoney and Dichter, *Financing Child Care in the United States: An Expanded Catalog of Current Strategies*. 2001 Edition. Kansas City: Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation.
- <sup>15</sup> Stoney, Louise, *Looking into New Mirrors: Lessons for Early Childhood Finance and System Building*, The Horizons Institute, October 1998
- <sup>16</sup> Maine Department of Human Services, Child Care and Development Fund County Profile, June, 2001
- <sup>17</sup> ASPIRE/JOBS is a program within the Department of Human Services that helps TANF/PaS participants find employment that will pay enough to make it possible for them to get off welfare. The ASPIRE program helps TANF/PaS participants with their many needs such as choosing the right career, finding affordable child care, and looking for work. Our workers will listen to participants and try to help solve any problems that prevent them from finding work.
- <sup>18</sup> Maine Department of Human Services, Resource Development Center Survey, December 1, 2000
- <sup>19</sup> The 2001 Maine CLASP document estimates that 30,704 children are eligible for a child care subsidy, but unable to access one using the following reasoning: Current census data reports that there are 140,681 children who need child care. If 40% rely on "informal" arrangements, 84,409 children are left needing formal "out of home" care. Census data can be used to estimate that 50% of families with dependent children under the age of 12 are below 85% of the State Median Income. This would estimate that 42,204 children who need formal child care are eligible for a child care subsidy. With 11,500 subsidies available, that leaves an estimated 30,704 children eligible, but unable to access a subsidy.
- <sup>20</sup> National Center for Children in Poverty, *Child Care by Kith and Kin: Supporting Family, Friends, and Neighbors Caring for Children*. Collins, A. & Carlson, B., 1998.
- <sup>21</sup> 2000 US Census figures
- <sup>22</sup> Carnegie Corporation's Starting Points: Meeting the Needs of Our Youngest Children
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid
- <sup>25</sup> *Quality 2000, Not By Chance: Creating an Early Care and Education System for America's Children*, The Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy at Yale University, Kagan, S. & Cohen, N., 1997
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid
- <sup>30</sup> Maine Department of Labor data and Maine Department of Human Services Listing of Licensed Providers, 2001
- <sup>31</sup> Carnegie Corporation's Starting Points: Meeting the Needs of Our Youngest Children
- <sup>32</sup> Based on Bureau of Labor Statistics Data, 2000; Maine Roads to Quality Baseline Survey, 2000; Center for the Child Care Workforce, *Current Data on Child Care Salaries and Benefits in the United States*, March, 2001.
- <sup>33</sup> Based on Bureau of Labor Statistics Data, 2000
- <sup>34</sup> Based on Maine Roads to Quality Baseline Survey, 2000
- <sup>35</sup> Based on Center for the Child Care Workforce, *Current Data on Child Care Salaries and Benefits in the United States*, March, 2001
- <sup>36</sup> Maine Department of Human Services, *Rules for the Licensing of Children's Day Care Facilities*, July 1, 1998
- <sup>37</sup> Maine Department of Human Services, Office of Child Care and Head Start. The Getting Started training is offered through the RDCs and Maine Roads to Quality curriculum
- <sup>38</sup> Information provided by the Maine Early Childhood Higher Education Committee



**Maine Child Care Advisory Council**